



Board on Electric Generation Siting and the Environment

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Siting Board Approves \$345 Million Genesee County Solar Farm

Largest Solar Farm Approved to Date in New York State

280 MW Project Advances New York State's Aggressive Clean Energy and Climate Goals for 70 Percent of Electricity to Come from Renewable Energy Sources by 2030

Solar Farm Will Produce Enough Electricity for 74,000 Average-Sized Homes Annually

Project Will Create Up To 290 Manufacturing, Supply and Construction Jobs

Overall Local & State Economic Contributions Total \$117.5 Million

17th Large-Scale Renewable Energy Project Approved by Siting Board Since 2018

ALBANY — The New York State Board on Electric Generation Siting and the Environment (Siting Board) today granted approval to Excelsior Energy Center, LLC to build and operate a 280-megawatt (MW) solar farm with 20 MWs of battery storage in the Town of Byron, Genesee County. The Siting Board's decision follows a detailed review and robust public participation process to ensure that the solar farm meets or exceeds all siting requirements.

"The Excelsior solar farm and other renewable energy projects built or currently under development are vital to meet the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act's aggressive carbon reduction and clean energy targets to combat climate change," **said Siting Board Chair Rory M. Christian.** "This solar farm will benefit all New Yorkers by reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, boosting clean-energy investment, creating clean-energy jobs, and improving our environment."

The Genesee County Economic Development Center estimated the cost of the project at \$345 million, and said it would create new jobs, provide long-term revenue and economic development to Genesee County and the Town of Byron. According to estimates, the project will provide \$117.5 million economic impact, which includes PILOT payments, host benefit payments, fire district payments, elimination of agricultural exemptions on acreage used for solar panels, direct construction payroll, other direct construction related purchases, and payroll and purchases during operations.

- Excelsior is expected to provide \$37.4 million in new revenue to the county, town and school district in property tax-type benefits to invest in infrastructure, additional services, and resources for residents.

- The project will create 290 jobs during construction, three to four full-time positions, and opportunities for landscaping and snow plowing throughout the life of the project. There will be opportunities for local businesses to supply materials to support the construction of the project, and service-industry businesses such as hotels, restaurants and entertainment venues will benefit from an increase in worker activity throughout construction.
- The project will invest approximately \$40.8 million in construction labor, creating employment opportunities for those in the construction trades, including equipment operators, truck drivers, laborers, and electricians.

According to the developer, operation of the facility will result in a reduction of approximately 205,432 tons of CO₂ from the New York State power sector in 2023.

The project area is about 3,443 vacant acres, and the project footprint is 1,716 acres. The solar farm is expected to begin commercial operation in late 2022. Through land agreements, the project developer says it supports the agricultural economy by infusing revenue into family farms and diversifying their income. The developer says it will support local farms that employ 70 people in the Town of Byron.

According to industry estimates, the 280-MW solar farm will produce enough electricity for 74,000 average-sized homes annually. Excelsior is a subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources, LLC, one of the world's largest generators of wind and solar energy, with generating facilities across the U.S. and in Canada.

After reviewing the agreed-upon certificate conditions submitted by the settlement parties, the Siting Board determined that the solar farm will be consistent with the energy policies and long-range planning objectives and strategies contained in the most recent State Energy Plan. Based on this, and based on its consideration of other relevant social, economic and other factors, the Siting Board determined that the project will be a beneficial addition to the electric generation capacity of the State and will also serve the goals of improving fuel diversity, grid reliability, and modernization of grid infrastructure.

Excelsior's formal application to the Siting Board was deemed compliant on April 8, 2021. The 10 parties to the proceeding included several State agencies, the local municipality, labor and community groups. The record includes more than 100 public comments and statements. The Siting Board held on-the-record virtual public statement hearings and compiled an evidentiary record containing expert and factual testimony. Excelsior, the seventeenth renewable energy project approved by the Siting Board since 2018, is the largest solar farm approved to date by the Siting Board.

The project will consist of commercial-scale solar arrays, access roads, buried and possibly overhead electric collection lines, a collection substation, and electrical interconnection facilities. Additional facilities would include a 345-kV switchyard which will be transferred to New York Power Authority to own, maintain, and operate. The project would be located on land leased from owners of private property. The height of the solar array itself will be approximately 13 feet. The project will include a 20 MW energy storage system which will charge exclusively off the solar array.

According to the developer, other significant project benefits will include the direct and indirect creation of jobs in construction and construction-related services, related supply chain jobs, jobs associated with induced impacts, and annual revenues for local economies during construction.

New York's Nation-Leading Clean Energy Initiative

New York State's nation-leading climate agenda is the most aggressive climate and clean energy initiative in the nation, calling for an orderly and just transition to clean energy that creates jobs and continues fostering a green economy as New York State recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. Enshrined into law through the CLCPA, New York is on a path to achieve its mandate of a zero-emission electricity sector by 2040, including 70 percent renewable electricity generation by 2030, and to reach economy-wide carbon neutrality. It builds on New York's unprecedented investments to ramp-up clean energy including over \$33 billion in 102 large-scale renewable and transmission projects across the state, \$6.8 billion to reduce buildings emissions, \$1.8 billion to scale up solar, more than \$1 billion for clean transportation initiatives, and over \$1.6 billion in NY Green Bank commitments. Combined, these investments are supporting nearly 158,000 jobs in New York's clean energy sector in 2020, a 2,100 percent growth in the distributed solar sector since 2011 and a commitment to develop 9,000 megawatts of offshore wind by 2035. Under the Climate Act, New York will build on this progress and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 85 percent from 1990 levels by 2050, while ensuring that at least 35 percent with a goal of 40 percent of the benefits of clean energy investments are directed to disadvantaged communities, and advance progress towards the state's 2025 energy efficiency target of reducing on-site energy consumption by 185 trillion BTUs of end-use energy savings.

Today's decision may be obtained by going to the Commission Documents section of the Commission's Web site at www.dps.ny.gov and entering Case Number 19-F-0299 in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number". Many libraries offer free Internet access. Commission documents may also be obtained from the Commission's Files Office, 14th floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 (518-474-2500). If you have difficulty understanding English, please call us at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this press release.